

Mentorship Program in Caribbean is Pairing up MPA Managers Across Region

A program is underway in the Caribbean to build MPA management capacity through mentor relationships. The program is pairing senior MPA professionals with less-experienced practitioners in the region, and providing a small grant to each pair to support geographic exchanges and knowledge-sharing between them.

Initiated in 2013, the program is managed by the UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CEP) and the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Caribbean region (SPAW-RAC), as part of the activities of the Caribbean MPA Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM). It receives financial support from Italy's development cooperation program.

The mentorship is an outgrowth of CaMPAM's Training of Trainers in MPA Management program – a two-week regional course (plus local training activities) that has been held ten times in the region since 1999. Over the years, senior marine resource professionals approached CaMPAM about developing a mentorship program, aimed at supporting professional development of the next generation of MPA managers across the wider Caribbean.

The program offers eight available mentors, possessing unique sets of expertise and hailing from different areas of the Caribbean. There are currently three active mentor/mentee pairs working together:

- Mentor at Reef Check Dominican Republic; mentee at Guanahacacibes National Park in Cuba
- Mentor at Bonaire National Marine Park; mentee at Caye Caulker Marine Reserve in Belize
- Mentor with CARIBSAVE (<http://caribbean.intasave.org>) in the Eastern Caribbean; mentee at Barbados Coastal Zone Management Unit

“We are very excited about this program, as the concept is many years in the making,” says Georgina Bustamante, CaMPAM coordinator.

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